United Nations

Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

+ Secretary-General launches $434 million appeal for humanitarian assistance in former Yugoslavia.

+ Secretary-General arrives in Moscow for official visit; has talks with President Yeltsin and other leaders of the Russian Federation.

+ United Nations issues stamps to mark International Space Year.

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In a message to a meeting in Geneva of the committee formed at the initiative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to prepare a comprehensive humanitarian response to the ongoing conflict, the Secretary-General said he had been "increasingly concerned with the unfolding crisis and the expanding humanitarian tragedy in the former Yugoslavia".

An inter-agency mission sent to the affected areas to re-assesss the emergency humanitarian requirements had concluded that more than 2.7 million persons were in need of emergency humanitarian assistance. Overall requirements amounted to more than $1 billion. Subsequently it had been established that $434 million would be required for "life-threatenting priority needs" to be channelled through the United NAtions system. The areas targeted for immediate relief were food, health services and shelter.

Appealing to the international community to respond promptly and generously to the challenge, Mr Boutrous-Ghali said the needs were critical.Hundreds of thousands of refugees were facing the prospect of a harsh winter without adequate food and shelter.

In New York today, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Eliasson said that with the onset of winter UNHCR was concerned to increase to the maximum extent possible the relief supplies delivered by land transport, which could handle a far greater volume than could be taken in by air. He noted that the ongoing airlift had been suspended following the tragic downing of an Italian aircraft yesterday.

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Mr Eliasson said the 2.7 million persons now estimated to be affected represented a seven-fold increase from the figure of 350,000 in November 1991, on the basis of which an earlier international appeal was made.

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Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali arrived in Moscow from Jakarta late last night, and had talks there today with President Boris Yeltsin and other leaders of the Russian Federation. A joint television appearance by the Secretary-General and President Yeltsin was planned.

On Monday the Secretary-General is to receive an honorary degree from Moscow University, before his return to New York.

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The United Nations postal service is issuing a series of stamps to commemorate the observance of 1992 as International Space Year. The issue of the stamps, with the theme "Mission to Planet Earth", was marked at a ceremony at U.N.headquarters today attended by two United States astronauts and students from the United Nations International School.

The astronauts - Henry Hartsfield and Richard Truly, who is also a former administrator of the U.S.National Aeronatutics and Space Administration- spoke of the human significance of space and the environment.

International Space Year is designed to foster global cooperation in space acitivities, with the support of the United Nations and a wide range of international and national organisations.

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